

# WOMEN IN EPHEBUS

with Gary Hoag

In 1 Timothy 2:11 Paul writes to Timothy, his pastoral trainee, "A woman must learn in quietness and submission." Paul also instructs women on how to dress and to be modest. Is this just another expression of ancient, patriarchal culture that sought to marginalize women? What might this cryptic text mean, and how does it relate to the situation of the church to which he was writing? The ancient writings of people like Xenophon of Ephesus offer important cultural details that greatly affect how we ought to interpret passages like this one, and they help us determine what their significance is for contemporary Christians. In the case of women in Ephesus, it may just be that the customs associated with the cult of Artemis offers surprising insight into the actual intention of Paul the apostle.

## BEFORE WATCHING

- + How many references to the city of Ephesus can you find in the New Testament? Make a list of what you discover about the ancient city.
- + Do you find that the meaning of the Bible is always perfectly clear? What parts of Scripture do you struggle to understand?
- + View some sample Bible passages related to women in the New Testament:  
Romans 16:7; Acts 2:17-19; Acts 18:24-26; 1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:9-15

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- + What surprised you the most about this video? Do you have any lingering questions?
- + Before watching this video, what would you have assumed that a message like, "she will be saved through child-bearing" meant? Have you ever heard someone use this passage for the suppression of women? While the background reasons for Paul's specific instructions in 1 Timothy 2 may be different from our own culture, the principles of *faith*, *love*, and *holiness* remain deeply important today. Do you think there are any standards that ought to govern how people should dress today? Offer reasons for your answers.
- + What was your attitude toward women in ministry before watching this video? Share as you're comfortable. Has it changed in any way?
- + This hair style described in 1 Timothy is linked to the style that women of the time would wear to show piety to the goddess Artemis. Paul was trying to get the early Christian churches to subvert this kind of myth by disassociating with the provocative symbols of the pagan cult. Are there any symbols in our culture today that perpetuate ungodly forms of sexuality, consumerism, or power? Share what those may be, and how the church may respond.
- + Do a search in the New Testament on the early church's general attitude toward wealth and showing favor to those who are affluent (1 Corinthians 1:25-28; James 2:1-6; 1 Peter 3:3-4). Is there an area in your life in which you seek to gain cultural respect or to gain high social status? Why do you think that is? Pray that the Holy Spirit illuminate your heart and strengthen you to count the cost of following Jesus in your own context.
- + Are there any other passages of Scripture that have puzzled you deeply? How does using historical background to illuminate Scripture's meaning make you feel? Are there any steps you might take to help further your knowledge of the biblical world? Visit [seedbed.com/BibleAndWomen](http://seedbed.com/BibleAndWomen) for more resources on biblical womanhood. Visit [seedbed.com/top-10](http://seedbed.com/top-10) for more resources to help you with your Bible study.

## MY TAKE-AWAYS

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